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THE BLOOM IN FRESH PRODUCE

Can supers meet rising consumer expectations?

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SUPERMARKET BUSINESS

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PAGE 18
PRODUCE:
CAN SUPERS MEET RISING CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS?

In today's supermarket, produce variety is almost a given. We've gone far from basic vegetables and fruits into more exotic fare. But does everyone know how to prepare these items? Does everyone know how to sell them? The answer, increasingly, is no, to both questions. There's still a way to go before retailers are satisfied with selling what's become of one of the supermarkets biggest draws: good, and well-displayed, produce.

PAGE 24
TWO STUDIES SAY DOUBLE COUPONING DOESN'T PAY

It depends on whom you ask, if you're questioning the effectiveness of double couponing. One report says nothing happens, while another says store loyalty may decrease.

PAGE 28
CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMES OF AGE

Consumer affairs has risen from aggressive activism to almost being an institution now, when many of its hard-won advances are thankfully, almost, taken for granted. Here is a look at how the area has matured into a still vital, but increasingly diversified one.

PAGE 39
THE HUFFS GET TOUGH

Huff's Food Town survived nicely, thank you, as a small, singular independent, just outside of Nashville. But when two big gun competitors started to move in, action was needed. The result, a new, larger Huff's Food Town, across the street from the old one, complete with Huff's original brand of customer service, friendliness ... and loyalty.

PAGE 47
MAKING TOYS WORK

Selling toys anywhere isn't exactly kid stuff. The field is tricky and even fickle. But for supermarket retailers, it's even more of a hard sell. Still, some are trying. It takes a lot of work and not a little fondness for toys, and intuition.

PAGE 55
A LOOK AT CROSS MERCHANDISING

Shelf space has to be earned in any super. Sometimes, in a great many stores, many general merchandise lines can't earn enough for the retailer to justify a full GM department. An alternative, very successfully being practiced in some places, is cross merchandising—as a customer convenience.

PAGE 62
KING KULLEN GOES FOR THE BIG ONE

King Kullen's first super store, The Super Place, takes some of the service departments of its acclaimed Kullenary and goes further. It still offers plenty of service and high-quality specialty departments, but has also pushed into nonfoods. The results, so far, are highly successful.

OTHER FEATURES AND COLUMNS

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SAMI UPDATE: 1983 Draws to a Bullish Close for HBA

For the first time since SUPERMARKET BUSINESS started to report on four-week SAMI unit trends of HBA items moving through food stores, all of the 12 proprietary remedy categories were in the plus column. The sales vitality in these categories during the reporting period ending December 9, 1983 helped to keep the total volume in all categories measured by SAMI moving briskly ahead.

The rate of gain was 4.9 percent, just under the near-record jump of 5.1 percent seen in the preceding period. There were gains in each of the eight product groups and in 37 out of 49 different HBA product categories that SAMI tracks (not counting appetite suppressants new to the SAMI system within the past year). The only unit volume loss of any consequence was a four-week decline of 279,000 units in the hair conditioning rinse category. However, this 3.5 percent loss rate was the lowest during the past six months. New product activity in the hair conditioner category has not been sufficient to cause these products to grow in importance.

Babies weak

The weakest product group has been, and still is, baby needs. A strong four-week gain of 8.3 percent for nursing supplies prevented a loss rate for the product group a a whole. Four-week movement of baby powders fell 8.9 percent behind the corresponding period a year ago, while infant clothes' volume lagged 7.8 percent behind the 1982 pace.

There were three categories in the personal deodorant product group that showed negative four-week trends, paced by a loss of 5.2 percent for cream deodorants. Spray deodorant unit volume was down 1.8 percent in the face of gains of 14.5 percent for stick deodorants and 10.1 percent for roll-ons.

For the first time in many months, unit sales in the two SAMI first aid categories did not rise in tandem. Sales of first aid products (bandages, cotton, gauze etc.) declined 1.7 percent in the 28 days ending December 9, 1983.

Hair loss

Among hair care needs, the same three categories that showed up in the loss column in the previous period were still in there this time. Those were home permanent kits, hair coloring, and hair conditioning rinses which had losses of 4.8 percent, 4.0 percent, and 3.5 percent respectively. The highest gain rate was 31.0 percent in the low-volume hair-setting needs category, triggered by new item introductions.

There was only one category with a negative four-week trend in the oral hygiene product group: denture cleaners with a loss of 1.9 percent. Breath fresheners showed a gain of 29.6 percent, in this, the smallest of the six oral hygiene categories measured by SAMI.

There were five categories of proprietary remedies with double-digit rates of growth. Still riding high are eye care products, up 31.3 percent, followed by cold tablets (+25.0 percent), sleeping aids (+18.1 percent), vitamins (+14.3 percent), and internal analgesics (+11.4 percent).

Razor blade unit sales have been showing continuing rates of loss, but the .5 percent decline in the most recent reporting period represents an improvement over the losses seen during recent months. Among shaving needs the most impressive gain rates were among after shave lotions (+13.5 percent) and shaving creams (+11.2 percent).

Losing face

The only four-week unit loss among the five skin care aids categories monitored by SAMI was a miniscule dip of half a percent for facial preparations. This loss rate represents an improvement over the trends during the past several months. The highest four-week gain rate was 94.6 percent in the case of suntan lotion/suntan oil, but during the November and December weeks, volume changes in this category are on a small base. Four-week unit sales of lip care products rose 10.4 percent. The most significant trend change occurred in the hand & body cream/lotions category where sales rose only 2.1 percent in comparison with gains of more than 15 percent in the two immediately prior SAMI reporting periods.

In 1982, the final quarter was a turbulent period for a number of brands as a result of the Tylenol scare. Fortunately, there was no such trauma experienced as 1983 drew to a bullish close. ■

HEALTH & BEAUTY AIDS
SAMI FOUR-WEEK FOOD STORE
UNIT TRENDS VS. YEAR AGO

PRODUCT GROUP AND CATEGORY	% CHANGE VS. YEAR AGO 4 WEEKS ENDING 10/14/83	4 WEEKS ENDING 11/11/83	4 WEEKS ENDING 12/9/83
BABY NEEDS	+ 2.0%	- 3.4%	+ 0.5%
Baby Powders	+ 0.8	- 6.2	- 8.9
Baby Oils, Creams & Lotions	+ 5.4	- 4.5	+ 1.0
Infant Clothes	- 12.4	- 17.6	- 7.8
Nursing Supplies	+ 5.3	+ 5.8	+ 8.3
DEODORANTS	+ 9.9%	+ 6.0%	+ 7.3%
Sprays	+ 4.5	- 4.6	- 1.8
Roll-On	+ 9.2	+ 10.8	+ 10.1
Stick Deodorants & Pads	+ 19.5	+ 14.1	+ 14.5
Creams	- 1.4	- 4.0	- 5.2
Deodorants & Talcum Powders	- 0.9	- 2.7	+ 5.9
Feminine Hygiene Deodorants	- 9.8	- 3.2	- 0.9
Foot Deodorants & Athlete's Foot Remedies	+ 14.6	+ 15.5	+ 13.9
Feminine Douches	+ 8.5	+ 5.3	+ 7.4
FIRST AID	+ 10.2%	+ 6.2%	+ 0.8%
Antiseptics	+ 14.7	+ 9.5	+ 10.9
First Aid Products	+ 9.1	+ 3.5	- 1.7
HAIR CARE NEEDS	+ 3.0%	+ 1.9%	+ 2.0%
Shampoos	+ 3.7	+ 2.9	+ 3.5
Hair Sprays	+ 8.4	+ 7.4	+ 3.5
Hair Conditioning Rinses	- 4.6	- 4.6	- 3.5
Hair Setting Needs	+ 22.0	+ 29.9	+ 31.0
Home Permanent Kits	+ 0.0	- 6.0	- 4.8
Hair Coloring	- 3.0	- 8.8	- 4.0
Hair Dressing Needs	+ 7.4	+ 5.6	+ 6.6
ORAL HYGIENE	+ 6.1%	+ 2.7%	+ 3.0%
Toothpastes & Powders	+ 8.3	+ 3.9	+ 1.1
Mouthwashes	- 0.4	- 1.2	+ 8.1
Breath Fresheners	+ 11.2	+ 0.8	+ 29.6
Denture Cleaners	- 2.2	- 0.9	- 1.9
Denture Adhesives	+ 2.9	- 0.8	+ 0.7
Toothbrushes	+ 5.6	+ 4.2	+ 7.3
PROPRIETARY REMEDIES	+ 4.7%	+ 6.7%	+ 8.2%
Antacids	- 1.2	+ 3.3	+ 3.6
Internal Analgesics	+ 10.0	+ 18.8	+ 11.4
External Analgesics	+ 0.1	+ 3.9	+ 7.5
Cold Tablets	+ 7.2	+ 12.7	+ 25.0
Nasal Sprays & Drops	- 1.6	+ 4.3	+ 5.0
Throats	- 2.5	- 1.9	+ 9.2
Cough Remedies	- 9.0	+ 4.3	+ 1.5
Laxatives	+ 7.0	+ 4.5	+ 3.4
Sleeping Aids	+ 9.3	+ 16.3	+ 18.1
Vitamins	+ 13.0	+ 0.0	+ 0.4
Eye Care	+ 29.5	+ 22.2	+ 15.3
Skin Care Products	+ 30.2	+ 26.2	+ 31.3
SHAVING NEEDS	- 0.7%	+ 1.6%	+ 3.6%
Blades & Razors	+ 19.9	+ 10.0	+ 11.2
Shave Creams	- 3.2	+ 4.2	+ 5.6
After Shave Lotions	+ 7.1	+ 12.2	+ 13.5
Razor Blades	- 5.6	- 3.1	- 0.5
Razors & Blades	- 3.3	+ 0.6	+ 8.4
SKIN CARE AIDS	+ 16.2	+ 14.6%	+ 4.8%
Hand & Body Creams & Lotions	+ 14.0	+ 15.8	+ 2.1
Facial Preparations	- 2.0	- 2.0	- 0.5
Lip Care Products	+ 19.3	- 1.2	+ 10.4
Suntan Lotions & Oils	+ 4.7	+ 8.1	+ 94.6
Cosmetic & Nail Preparations			
Skin Aids	+ 10.9	+ 4.9	- 7.9
TOTAL HBA CATEGORIES	+ 4.9%	+ 3.4%	+ 4.9%